October-November 10c

Equality

THE AMERICAN WAY ★ EQUAL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

America Mobilizes – for Peace

by FREDERICK V. FIELD

Race Prejudice in the Schools

An Open Letter to the Board of Education

Race Hatred at Gompers School

by BELLA V. DODD

Children Without Race Prejudice

by NORMAN STUDER

The War and Anti-Semitism

by VITO MARCANTONIO

Coughlin's Union Saboteurs

by HERBERT R. LANSNER

NEW YORK CITY CONFERENC

FOR

PROTECTION of FOREIGN BORN

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 19, 1940

12:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

HOTEL EDISON

West 47th Street at Broadway

New York City

"Here is not merely a nation but a teeming nation of nations."—**Walt Whitman**

NEW YORK CITY stands as a monument to the labor of immigrants. They dug subways, erected skyscrapers, established trade unions and societies. They work in the garment shops and power plants. They are doctors, trolley car conductors and housewives.

More than five million of the seven million residents of New York City are immigrants or the children of immigrants.

Today, the growth of war hysteria in the United States has intensified discrimination against these people who have given their lives to the building of our city. We witness the spectacle of one and a quarter million New Yorkers—our neighbors, friends and associates—being fingerprinted and registered like common criminals.

All residents of New York City are seriously affected by the spread of this un-American spirit of intolerance and bigotry, which seeks to create a scapegoat of the foreign born and threatens to destroy our democratic institutions.

These facts make it imperative that we, the people of New York City, take immediate steps to defend American democracy and preserve our traditions of liberty by defeating discrimination against non-citizen and naturalized Americans. The American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born is calling this New York City Conference, therefore, for the following objectives:

Repeal of the Alien Registration Act of 1940.

Defeat Discrimination against Americans of foreign birth.

Counteract anti-foreign propaganda.

Facilitate the process of naturalization.

Prevent the passage of anti-alien legislation.

To this important conference we are inviting representatives from all organizations and communities in New York City—language, fraternal, religious, labor, community, cultural, racial, social, youth, women's organizations, and individuals in sympathy with its aims. We urge your organization to send delegates or observers to participate in this conference which will reaffirm in this present period the devotion of the people of New York City to those American ideals of democracy and equality enunciated in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of the United States.

Carey McWilliams, Chairman
American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born
79 Fifth Ave., New York City

I enclose $.....to help defray the very considerable expense of the Conference and to continue its important work.

☐ Please send me a Registration Blank for the Conference.

☐ Please send me additional information about the work of your Committee.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

Speakers will be announced October 10th.

●

Each organization is entitled to two delegates or observers. Individuals are invited to attend as visitors. Observers and visitors will have a voice but no vote. Registration fee for delegates, observers and visitors: $1.00, payable in advance or when registering at the Conference.

About this issue . .

Our "Open Letter" to the Board of Education of New York City calls attention to the case of race prejudice at the Gompers Vocational School, described in this issue by DR. BELLA V. DODD. Dr. Dodd is Legislative Representative of the New York State Federation of Teachers Unions, and also of Local 5, of the Teachers Union in New York City. The interest of Dr. Dodd and the Teachers Union in this case is another concrete illustration of the linkage of trade unionism with the defense of all minority rights. . . .

Fortunately, we are able to present the positive side of the picture in NORMAN STUDER'S article, "Children Without Race Prejudice," presenting the intelligent methods employed to establish healthy relationships between Negro and white children at the Little Red School House. The school, at which Mr. Studer teaches, is so named because it is built on the principle of recapturing the close, personal relation between teacher and pupil prevailing in the old-fashioned country school house.

The fruits of the enormously successful Emergency Peace Mobilization at Chicago are discussed by FREDERICK V. FIELD, Executive Secretary of the American Peace Mobilization, the permanent organization created in Chicago. . . .

REPRESENTATIVE VITO MARCANTONIO contributes the piece on "War and Anti-Semitism." The courageous Congressman from New York has played a historic part in the frenzied session recently climaxed by the passage of the conscription bill. Mr. Marcantonio is a candidate for re-election this November. . . .

LILLIAN BARNARD GILKES has lived for several brief periods with Arkansas share-croppers. At present she is working on a novel about the share-croppers and another on her native South. She is also Director of the Writers School of the League of American Writers. . . .

"Coughlin's Union Saboteurs" was written by EQUALITY'S crack investigator and Associate Editor, HERBERT LANSNER. . . .

POLK LEWIS is a young Negro writer living in New York City.

The present issue is a combined October-November number. Subscriptions will be extended accordingly.

EQUALITY,
512 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

☐ Enclosed is $1.00 for a year's subscription.

☐ Enclosed is $.....as a contribution.

Signed .....

Address .....

Vol. 2 OCT.-NOV., 1940 No. 10

Equality

An Independent, Non-Sectarian Monthly Journal to Defend Democratic Rights and Combat Racial and Religious Intolerance

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Cutting the Current of the War-Hysteria Machine.

AMERICA MOBILIZES . . . FOR PEACE

"Peace Through Democracy, Democracy Through Peace!"

by **FREDERICK V. FIELD** *Executive Secretary, A.P.M.*

WHEN the Conscription Bill came up for final action in the House, 64 Representatives from the eight Southern "poll tax" states voted "aye", only 2 voted "nay". In these "poll tax" states representatives are elected by a vote of 5.8% of the population. A great part of the remaining voters are kept away from the polls by the poll tax and intimidation. No one has dared to claim that 5.8% of the voters speak the will of the people. Now, if the votes from these eight Southern states had been disqualified, the Conscription Bill would have been defeated.

No diagram is needed to make the point. The step from poll taxes to military law is short and quick. This connection demonstrates with irrefutable logic this fundamental fact: the fight for real democracy in this country must be waged at once on every single front; each issue is a "big issue."

Today all issues are summed up in the threat to American democracy from the plans of the war-makers. To meet this threat, 15,000,000 men and women sent 6,000 delegates to Chicago on Labor Day in an Emergency Peace Mobilization. Out of this Mobilization by and for the people came a five-plank platform. We are committed to the fight to keep America out of war; to fight for labor, for the unemployed, for the aged; for housing, education, and health; against all types of discrimination, against alien and religious persecution; against the poll tax and lynching.

The Chicago meeting set up the American Peace Mobilization, a permanent, nationally organized institution. The 6000 delegates (and the 16,000 partisans of peace who turned up beside) have returned to their home towns in 48 States, there to set up local Peace Mobilizations, each one geared to the national program, each one fighting locally as well as nationally for our five planks. The first job of these Peace Mobilizations will be to acquaint everybody with our program for organized action, and to enroll as many hundreds of thousands of Peace Volunteers as possible at once.

A national headquarters of APM was opened in Washington immediately after the convention, and the fight against the Conscription Bill began immediately. Here's where it led us:

The first time we picketed Congress on September 5, Washington police arrested five ministers in our lines, as one of the policemen shouted: "Now sing the Star Spangled Banner, you kikes!"

Meanwhile in Michigan, when the Rev. Owen Knox, president of the Civil Rights Federation and a member of APM, protested against some local infringements of civil liberties by the FBI, he got his reply from Chief J. Edgar Hoover in person, who alluded to a Fifth Column in Europe which had led to the downfall of "*Christian* Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France" (Quoted from *The Washington Post*, Sept. 11, 1940, p. 25).

Now the Conscription Bill has become law and a token payment has already been made to the 64 poll taxers: in the South the draft will be Jim Crow-ed; and the President has just called for the formation of three all-Negro regiments.

This we must remember: before the pogrom can begin, somebody must scrawl the word "Jew" and go unpunished; before the union can be smashed, a strike must be broken; before the alien could be finger-printed he had to be smeared with "Fifth Columnist."

Each attack on each civil liberty in each community must therefore get its immediate answer from all of us together. And each affirmation of a democratic principle—by labor, by the church, by the young, by the old, by anybody—must get its support from all of us. And the time to do it is now, before the union can be broken, before price levels can skyrocket, before free speech can be shut off, before war can be declared.

That is what APM is geared to do, and it needs all the help it can get—now.

Afterwards is too late.

THE WAR AND ANTI-SEMITISM

by Hon. VITO MARCANTONIO

Representative of the 20th Congressional District, New York

THERE are certain things about which, people feel, the less said the better. Take anti-Semitism, for example. Anyone who has kept his finger on the pulse of American life knows that anti-Semitism is on the increase in the United States. But, to allow this festering sore to spread its pernicious influences on the body politic of American life without raising one's voice against it, is to be partner in the crime of destroying the soul of America.

Never in the history of the United States were the "Merchants of Hate" bolder or more brazen in their activities. Never before did men who were elected to sit in the halls of Congress dare to spread anti-Semitic venom across the pages of the Congressional Record. Never before did candidates who were attempting to be elected by the people of America dare to run on an out and out campaign of hate.

Anti-Semitism is a weapon used in order to divide a people, a wedge which is used to set one group against another in order to destroy the attempts of a people to gain for themselves a wider and more democratic way of life. Anti-Semitism, like all other forms of race hatred, has always been fostered by reactionary groups, particularly in moments of crisis, when a movement of the people towards a greater unity threatens to upset their sinister plans.

In the light of such an understanding of the causes of anti-Semitism, it is necessary to analyze carefully what it is exactly that has arisen in the United States today that causes the forces of anti-Semitism to work more viciously than ever before.

I believe that the answer can be found in the fact that a hysteria is being manufactured by those who seek to involve America in the devastating war which is bringing havoc and destruction to millions of people on the other side of the Atlantic. This war which they are attempting to drag the American people into is not a war in behalf of the American people and their interests, is not a war in defense of the men and women on W.P.A., is not a war in defense of the men and women in the shops and the factories, but a war to protect the stake of the American dollar and for an extension of our imperialism in South and Central America.

It is obvious that such a war is not a war for the American people.

It is natural therefore that the American people should be opposed to such a war. It becomes necessary therefore for those who have been conspiring to catapult America into the war to destroy the civil rights and liberties of the American people, to attempt to sow the seeds of enmity against minorities. That is why we are witnessing in a free America the Hitler-imitating spectacle of 3,500,000 men, women and children, composed of loyal hard-working people in all walks of life—priests, nuns, rabbis, ministers, brick-layers, carpenters and clerks, all of whom have been making a contribution to the greatness of America, being subjected to the criminal-like treatment of registration and finger-printing. That is why it was necessary to force through the Burke-Wadsworth Conscription Bill, which the American people were solidly opposed to, in order to forcibly take the young men of America from their homes, to militarize them, to regiment them and to knock out of their system every democratic concept which they had learned since childhood.

The defeat of anti-Semitism becomes therefore a major task not alone for the Jewish people, but for all those who love democracy. Let

(*Continued on page* 19)

COUGHLIN'S UNION SABOTEURS

by HERBERT R. LANSNER

IN JUNE OF 1939 Thomas W. Stack, Coughlinite and leader of a "Social Justice Club," was found guilty by a committee of the Transport Workers Union of having carried out a deliberate program of sabotage designed to disrupt and wreck the union. Twenty-eight other Coughlinites faced the T.W.U. committee on the same charge. The technique of the Coughlinites was to tie up the IRT subway system by tampering with switches and stopping trains in an effort to discredit the union, so that the IRT company could point to the acts as a violation of contract. The campaign of disruption was planned at meetings held at Triboro Hall in the Bronx, favorite rallying point for the Christian Front and the Christian Mobilizers. The men who planned the sabotage were members of the Transport Workers Union. Their chief aim was to split the union and render it powerless.

This was by no means the first attempt at union-busting engaged in by Coughlinites. The technique is one of the favorite devices employed by the hypocritical radio priest and his followers. Coughlin is a past master at it himself. Working hand in hand with automobile manufacturers such as Henry Ford, Coughlin has constantly sought to split the union movement in the auto and allied industries. In May of 1935 he sponsored a new union, in an effort to disrupt the United Automobile Workers of America. No sooner did the C.I.O. begin an organizing campaign than Coughlin devoted a large portion of his "educational radio talks" to vilifying John L. Lewis. In doing so, he carried on his campaign side by side with the powerful automobile manufacturers once again. And on New Years' Day in 1937 he brought that alliance right into the open with his attack on the General Motors' strikers. Shortly afterward he tried to help his friend Henry Ford by organizing a company union at Ford's Dearborn Plant under the name of Workers Council for Social Justice.

The policies which accompanied such attempted penetration at the Ford plants are well known by now. In order to crush the unions which fought for labor's rights, Ford, through his foreman Harry Bennett, linked himself with the notorious Black Legion. It was the Black Legion which murdered John Bielak, organizer for the United Auto Workers, in 1933; and it was the Black Legion which murdered George Marchuk of the Auto Workers Union in the same year. Ford "service men" organized by Harry Bennett machine-gunned to death five hunger marchers on March 7, 1932, and brutally assaulted men and women organizers of the U.A.W. on May 26, 1937. In the years that followed, scores of beatings were carried out in order to suppress the labor movement among Ford workers. Ford organized the largest private Gestapo in the world —consisting of paroled convicts, private detectives and thugs.

In these efforts of Ford's, Father Coughlin was a valuable instrument. He acted first as a propagandist for Ford and against the unions which were seeking to organize the Ford plants. His other chief function was the sponsorship of disruptive movements within the already organized unions at General Motors and other plants. Where a union was too strong and closely knit for effective disruption, Coughlin sponsored new unions.

One of the most widely used instruments in Coughlin's anti-labor campaign was anti-Semitism. Here, as in his other efforts, Coughlin raised anti-Semitism as a false issue to turn the minds of the workers away from the men who were paying them low wages for long hours— the automobile manufacturers. It was a splitting tactic. It went side-by-side with anti-Negro propaganda, which was likewise meant to drive a wedge through union solidarity by playing white laborers off against black.

When he went after the unions, Coughlin's bag of tricks was put into full use. Rarely did the Detroit priest implicate himself so openly and so directly as on these occasions. In his efforts to destroy the auto unions, Coughlin was

playing a visible hand. He was quite frankly serving as the agent for the reactionary auto owners—demonstrating clearly the true, characteristic role of the fascist propagandist.

•

Several unions in New York are, at this very moment, bucking up against Coughlin's forces. The Coughlinites have begun to reorganize themselves within various unions and have once again started to cause trouble.

The situation now, however, is different from what it was in 1935 and 1936. The war in Europe and the tendencies of the Administration in Washington to take a part in it have created a new base for union problems. The Coughlinites, formerly alone and isolated from decent union elements, have now found themselves allies. *The allies in this case are those forces within the labor movement which are pro-war and which have hitched themselves unreservedly to the Administration's interventionist program. The alliance is directed against the progressive anti-war forces in the unions.*

Within one of New York's largest unions—which must remain nameless owing to the internal struggle which is going on at this writing—the Coughlinites and their partners have caused enormous strife and confusion. As a first step, the Coughlinites organized five clubs within the union, ostensibly as social centers for Irish-American union members. But no sooner had control been assured, when the Coughlin group began to use them as organizational points. Most of the Irish workers in the union discovered the purpose of the clubs immediately, and left them. But a small number remained, and the nucleus was formed.

It was then that the Coughlinites employed their customary tactics. Meetings were broken up, union members intimidated. At a recent meeting held to elect representatives to the Rochester C.I.O. convention, the Coughlinites beat down the strength of the progressive group by terroristic methods. If a union member got up to protest, someone would shout "Sit down, you kike!" Attempts to pass resolutions were stifled with cries of "shut the damn Reds up!" These were tried and true Coughlinite tactics; but it was at this point that the Coughlin forces were joined by those who, following the lead of Sidney Hillman, wanted to stampede the union into supporting the Roosevelt Administration in its road-to-war program. Many of those who now held hands with the Coughlinites were Jewish. They may not have relished anti-Semitism as such; but they had an end in view with which they rationalized the means.

The tactics worked. Hundreds of people left the meeting because of their fear of violence. That was all that was necessary. The number of people left was sufficiently small to enable the Coughlinites and their newly-made friends to carry the elections for delegates. It is interesting to note that the candidates had been decided upon at a caucus attended by both the Coughlinites and the pro-Roosevelt group. Whatever differences there were between them were buried in their mutual anxiety to crush the progressives in the union.

The results were seen at the Rochester convention when the same groups, joining with similar groups from other unions, made a shambles of the meeting and caused John L. Lewis to declare it illegal. The progressive elements in the unions refused to be drafted for Hillman and Roosevelt, and walked out. Those who remained were too small in number to do anything. In addition, they found themselves faced with a split in their ranks. The Coughlinites and their pro-Hillman-Roosevelt allies had been able to compromise on their mutual dislike of the anti-Administration peace group. But at this point a new force made itself felt. The Coughlinites were in large part pro-Willkie. Their new partners were pro-Roosevelt. On such weak ground, when the crisis came, the coalition could not stand up.

The fight is going on, with variations, in unions throughout the country. But as the stark realities of the war program, with its ominous threat to the labor movement, grow clearer, union men are beginning to understand how very great their stake in peace, democracy and unity has become.

Coughlinism is one of the obstacles in the way. The radio priest is playing the dual role of splitting the unions and weakening the peace front. The antidote is a strong, united labor movement awakened to the perils it faces; a thorough exposure of Coughlin; and an honest, unhypocritical response by the Administration to the just demands of America's working men and women.

An Open Letter

The Board of Education
New York City.

Gentlemen and Ladies:

Several cases of discrimination against minority groups in the New York City school system have been brought to our attention. We are aware that these incidents have also been brought to yours. We believe that they demand a vigorous, immediate and thorough investigation.

At a time like the present, when anti-Semitism and prejudice against Negroes and other minorities are on the increase, it is necessary for you to exercise the most exacting care in keeping the educational system free from the disintegrating influence of racial hatred.

One particularly flagrant case of intolerance has recently occurred. It is described in the pages of this magazine by Dr. Bella V. Dodd. In itself it is thoroughly deplorable and should be remedied without delay. The urgency of this remedy, however, is not pressed upon us by this case alone, but by the fact that it is symptomatic of a trend in society as well as in the educational system.

It is not unknown to you that visible manifestations of intolerance and discrimination have occurred in educational institutions throughout the country. The Bertrand Russell case is one instance; the outlawing of the American Student Union on many college campuses is another; and the recent statement of Nicholas Murray Butler, which virtually denies academic freedom to the teachers and students of Columbia University, is a third. These cases could be multiplied, but the moral is clear: civil liberties, academic freedom and racial tolerance in the schools all partake of a single pattern and must be jealously guarded.

The extraordinary case which is cited by Dr. Dodd in this issue involves the members of your Board—who, by their inaction, have permitted the situation to exist. Dr. Dodd describes incidents whose occurrence in our public school system cannot be tolerated. The fact that they have repeatedly occurred and are still unrectified is, frankly, a reflection upon those people who make up our educational boards. The responsibility, gentlemen, is yours. According to the facts, you are well-informed about all the particulars of the case. Yet it appears that you have chosen acquiescence rather than action. This is extremely puzzling; it will be equally so to the thousands of people who will now be acquainted with the facts of the case for perhaps the first time.

The affidavits reproduced in the present issue of *Equality*, signed by several teachers of the Samuel Gompers Vocational School, are only a small selection from the many that are available. They are certainly sufficient to justify an immediate inquiry into the fitness of both Mr. Murphy and Dr. Pickett to remain in positions of such responsibility.

In her article, Dr. Dodd makes the point clear. It makes no difference whose toes are stepped on. It is obvious from the facts that school politics are involved, that exposure may bring into the light some highly suspicious connections between the culprits and those who have permitted them to carry on their disgusting activity. This is not a petty issue; it is a matter of grave importance.

Equality supports Dr. Dodd's demand that the trial of Dr. Pickett be expedited. As for Mr. Murphy, we think that such a man does not belong in the educational system of our city. We demand that his case be re-opened.

The Editors

RACE HATRED AT GOMPERS VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

by DR. BELLA V. DODD

A Festering Case of Racial Discrimination is Presented by Mrs. Dodd, With a Call to Action

---

MR. TIMOTHY P. MURPHY, a member of the teaching staff of Samuel Gompers Vocational School in the Bronx, is a very busy man. The phrase "member of the teaching staff" covers much ground, for Mr. Murphy is also dean, chairman of the academic department, librarian and administrator of the National Youth Administration; and in February of this year he was made acting chairman of the History Department, although he has no license in that subject. Most of Mr. Murphy's appointments are the gift of his friend—Principal of Gompers Vocational School, Dr. Charles J. Pickett.

Mr. Murphy's positions are responsible ones. It seems logical to assume that such responsibilities would not be turned over to an unworthy person. Certainly not to a bigot.

The assumption is wrong. From duly notarized and sworn statements attested to by a group of Gompers teachers, Mr. Murphy stands revealed as an intolerant, prejudiced, bigoted person, a dangerous and destructive influence in the New York City school system.

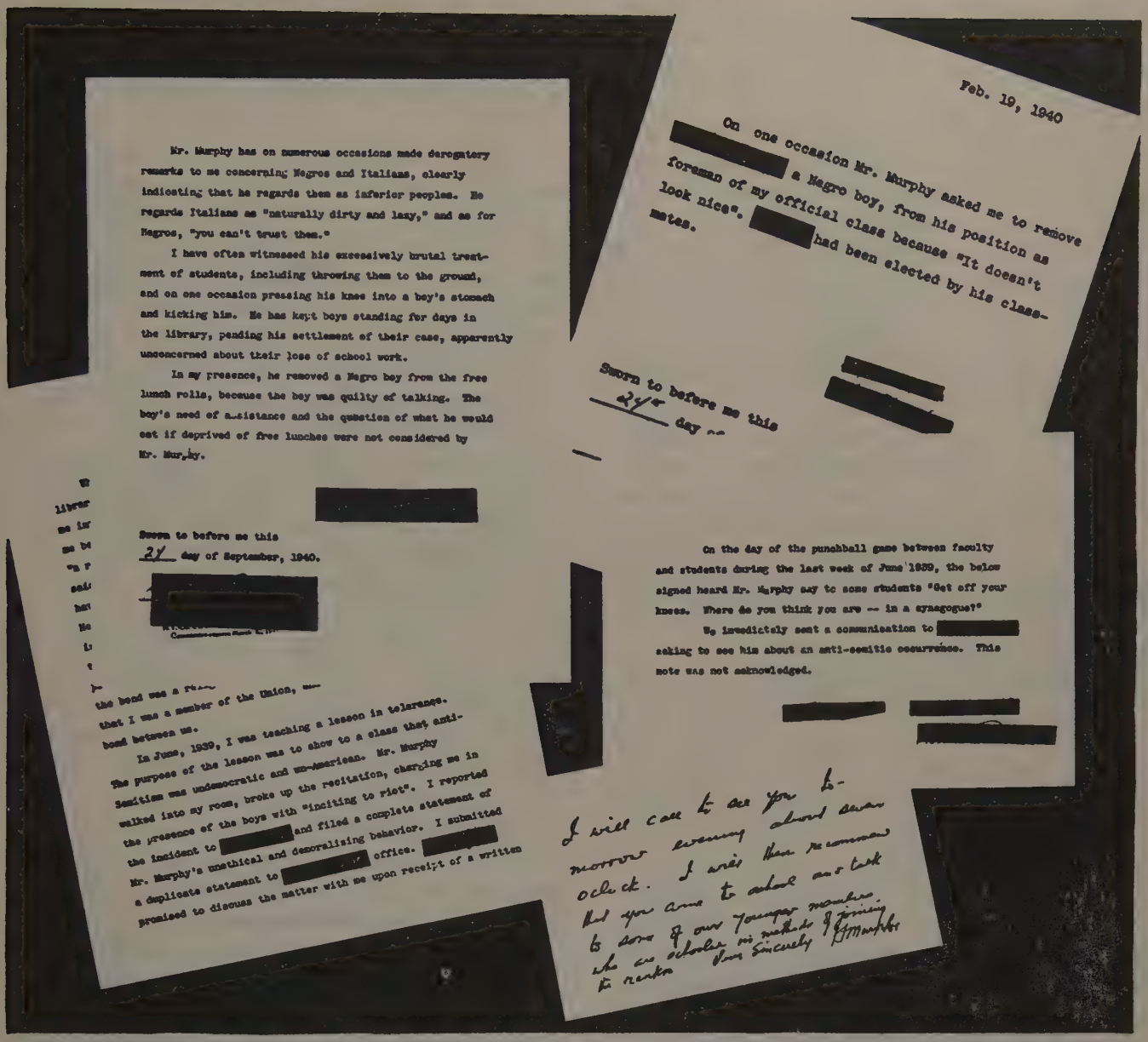
Italian, Negro, Jew

In his capacity as dean, Mr. Murphy disciplined students. The task is one for an understanding man, a man without bias. Mr. Murphy showed himself to be neither understanding nor unbiased. When Italian students were brought before him for infractions, Mr. Murphy's remarks were not those one might expect from an intelligent, tolerant person. "Dirty guineas," he called them. And to that he added "wops" and "Al Capones."

But Murphy's hates were not confined to students of Italian derivation. Negro boys met particularly with his dislike. Teachers who dared appoint Negro children as foremen to lead their classes were ordered by Murphy to remove them. One teacher objected. He was told that "the Boss wouldn't like it." The "Boss" referred to was Dr. Pickett, the Principal. On another occasion, Murphy declared: "The niggers come from homes in which the parents don't give a damn about their kids." On still another occasion Mr. Murphy asked a teacher to remove a Negro foreman elected by the boys in his class "because it didn't look nice."

About a year ago a circular was issued by the Superintendent of Schools calling attention to the need of teaching tolerance in the schools. Each teacher at the Gompers School, including Dean Murphy, received a copy of the circular. Obviously this was ignored by Murphy, for his deprecations continued. In June of 1939 Mr. Murphy was supervising the faculty-student soft ball game in the school yard. Several of the students, in the midst of the game, got down on their knees. Murphy was annoyed. "Get off your knees," he shouted. "Where do you think you are, in a synagogue?" A teacher who tried to intercede for the boys was told by Murphy that he was a troublemaker. When another teacher brought the matter to the attention of Principal Pickett, he was told: "Oh, get away, that's all you have to do! Get back to your room. You heard my orders." Other attempts to reach Pickett were met with stony silence.

Not only did Murphy ignore the circular urging the teaching of tolerance in class rooms; he



Mr. Murphy has on numerous occasions made derogatory remarks to me concerning Negros and Italians, clearly indicating that he regards them as inferior peoples. He regards Italians as "naturally dirty and lazy," and as for Negros, "you can't trust them."

I have often witnessed his excessively brutal treatment of students, including throwing them to the ground, and on one occasion pressing his knee into a boy's stomach and kicking him. He has kept boys standing for days in the library, pending his settlement of their case, apparently unconcerned about their loss of school work.

In my presence, he removed a Negro boy from the free lunch rolls, because the boy was guilty of talking. The boy's need of assistance and the question of what he would eat if deprived of free lunches were not considered by Mr. Murphy.

[redacted]

Sworn to before me this 27 day of September, 1940.

[redacted]

Feb. 19, 1940

On one occasion Mr. Murphy asked me to remove [redacted] a Negro boy, from his position as foreman of my official class because "It doesn't look nice". [redacted] had been elected by his classmates.

Sworn to before me this 24th day [illegible]

[redacted]

On the day of the punchball game between faculty and students during the last week of June 1939, the below signed heard Mr. Murphy say to some students "Get off your knees. Where do you think you are -- in a synagogue?"

We immediately sent a communication to [redacted] asking to see him about an anti-semitic occurrence. This note was not acknowledged.

[redacted]

the bond was a [illegible] that I was a member of the Union, [illegible] bond between us.

In June, 1939, I was teaching a lesson in tolerance. The purpose of the lesson was to show to a class that anti-Semitism was undemocratic and un-American. Mr. Murphy walked into my room, broke up the recitation, charging me in the presence of the boys with "inciting to riot". I reported the incident to [redacted] and filed a complete statement of Mr. Murphy's unethical and demoralising behavior. I submitted a duplicate statement to [redacted] office. [redacted] promised to discuss the matter with me upon receipt of a written

I will call to see you tomorrow evening about seven o'clock. I wish then to request that you come to school and talk to some of our younger members who are schooled in methods of joining the ranks.

Yours Sincerely

Affidavits signed by Gompers teachers testify to Murphy's character. Damning evidence is the post-card in the right-hand corner, sent by Murphy to Werner Grunwald, allegedly a member of the Nazi Bund. He asks Grunwald to talk to boys "schooled in methods of joining the ranks."

also tried to sabotage the attempts of others to do so. On June 8, 1939, Murphy entered the room of a teacher who was discussing the subject of tolerance with his class. The day before there had been some violent anti-Semitic remarks made by some boys in the classroom. The teacher, who happened to be a Catholic, was explaining to the class that anti-Semitism and bigotry of all kinds were dangerous. Murphy seated himself at the desk and copied the statements made by the teacher. He interrupted frequently, then argued against the teacher's position before the class, even questioning his honesty. He accused the teacher of fostering racial hatred by discussing Negro persecution. Murphy's tone was such that when he had left, several students asked the teacher whether he was going to lose his job.

Murphy later disrupted a civics lesson on a case involving civil liberties and Mayor Hague. Murphy ordered the teacher out of the room and discussed the lesson with him in the hall. He contended that Mayor Hague was being misjudged, that Hague had not violated anyone's civil liberties. Yet the lesson was based on a Supreme Court

decision that held just the opposite. When the teacher objected, Murphy declared flatly that the subject of civil liberties was above the heads of the students.

Nor was this all. Murphy has been charged with searching boys and confiscating things found in their pockets which he did not like. Exactly why he did this is a matter which is locked in his own mind; but it is certainly linked with the fact that he inaugurated an insidious spy system—doing favors for boys who, in turn, told him everything that they saw and heard in classrooms. Under the classification of "everything" was criticism of Murphy, "radicalism," and the like. One of these boy spies received a number of failing marks from various teachers because he rarely attended class. Murphy forced the teachers to change the marks. He expelled three boys from school against school regulations. He attempted to intimidate teachers by walking into their classes and "observing" them—in some instances as many as thirty times in two weeks.

On one occasion, a young teacher who had just received an appointment at Gompers, was called to Murphy's office. Murphy indicated a desire to help the new teacher, pointing out that it was important to know the "right people" and do the "right" things. Union teachers, (there is a Teachers' Union branch in the school) were definitely not the right people, said Mr. Murphy. They were "trouble-makers." Murphy referred repeatedly to "a bond of sympathy which should keep us together." The teacher interpreted this as meaning that both he and Murphy were of the same religious faith. The interview came to an abrupt end when the teacher informed Murphy that he belonged to the Teachers Union, and that he had no intention of resigning.

The facts, then, are quite clear and fully attested. Innumerable protests were made by Gompers teachers. Letters written by these teachers were sent to the Board of Education.

Facts Ignored?

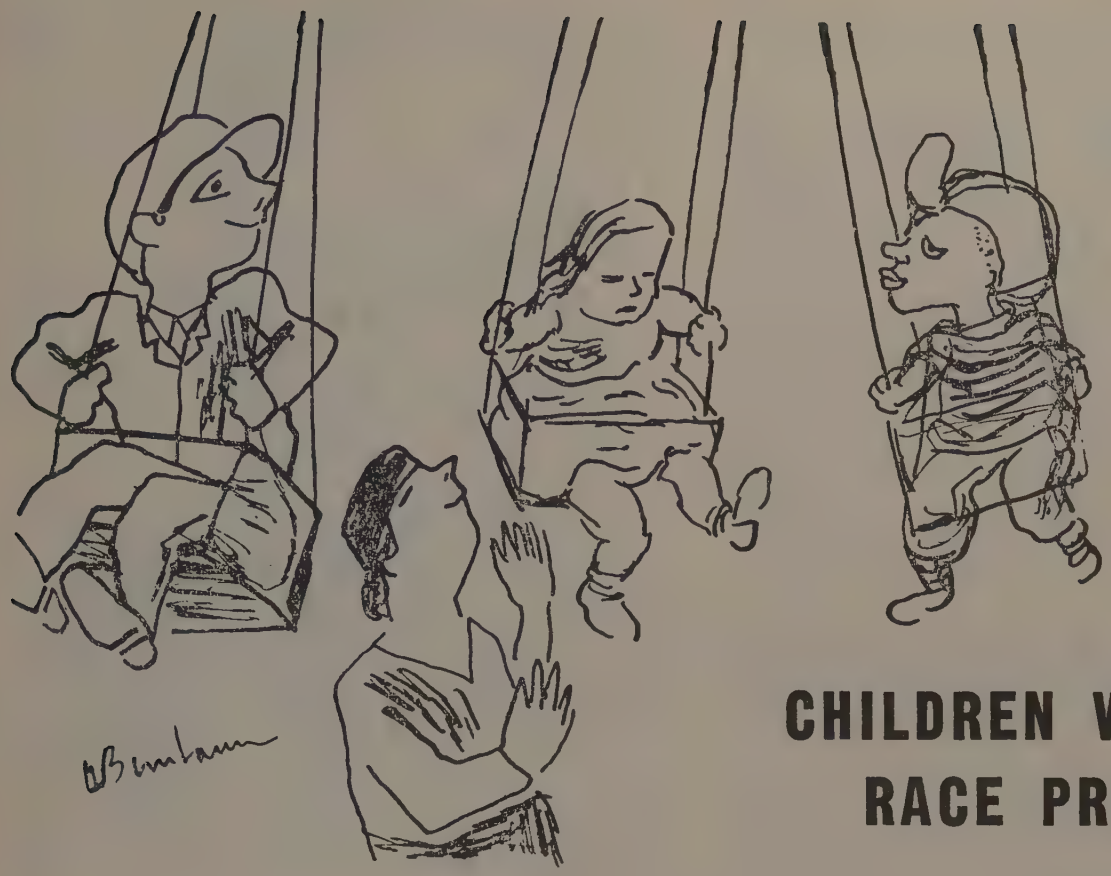
Results? The acting chairman of the English Department, who had submitted a statement about Murphy, was summarily removed by the Principal, Dr. Pickett. This was done in spite of the fact that the teacher only a short while before had been commended by the Director of Vocational Schools. Another teacher who had been so bold as to sign an affidavit was "observed" forty times in two weeks by Mr. Murphy. A petition insisting upon Murphy's excellent character appeared from nowhere, meeting with little success.

Nothing was done by school authorities for some time. More letters were sent by those teachers who had crossed Mr. Murphy. Finally Superintendent Frost visited the school, interviewed the teachers who had presented charges. He asked them why they were so concerned about Italians, and suggested that they mind their own business.

Some time later three teachers were called to the headquarters of the Board of Education. A Committee consisting of several superintendents, among them Dr. Greenberg, Dr. Grady and Morris Siegel, Director of Vocational Schools, questioned them. Strangely enough, however, the questions did not concern the matter at issue—Mr. Murphy and his activities. These were disposed of briefly. Mr. Siegel was more interested in the use of English by one of the teachers. The records of the teachers were questioned. Some books which they had put on a student reading list were criticized. The Murphy affair was virtually ignored. Ironically, those teachers who at the risk of losing their jobs had brought charges, found themselves being investigated.

At the present, the matter has progressed slightly. Dr. Pickett at this writing is about to go on trial for false representations as to the number of teachers under his administration. It is charged that he put extra teachers on the school staff in order that his salary might be proportionally increased. It is amazing to learn that while he is on trial under serious charges, he is permitted to be at school and to utilize its facilities. The hearings which began this summer are now dragging along. There are delays upon delays. And during this time critics of the Pickett-Murphy regime are told that nothing can be done about Mr. Murphy. It seems to matter little how many young people he injures by his intolerance and his race prejudice.

The Board of Education and the City Administration are under obligation to hasten the investigation and complete the trial. It matters not whose feelings are hurt and which political or religious group is offended. We cannot dilly dally with dangerous forces which dwarf the mind and spirit of our children.



CHILDREN WITHOUT RACE PREJUDICE

by NORMAN STUDER

ONE of the most important problems of democracy in education is the problem of racial equality. The white child who grows up in America today has little chance of escaping race prejudice, for in the institutions that shape his attitudes the cards are stacked against the Negro. Our schools must take up the challenge of this problem, for it is in youth that the twig is bent.

Go back of the man or woman who betrays race prejudice and you will find a child who read textbooks that ignore completely the heroic achievements of the Negro people in our history. He or she never heard of Crispus Attucks, or Phillis Wheatley, or Frederick Douglass or Harriet Tubman. No mention is made of Nat Turner, of the many insurrections against slavery, or of the 178,000 Negro soldiers who fought in the Civil War. The Reconstruction period is pictured in most textbooks as a time when the Negro in his new freedom proved himself thoroughly ignorant, vicious, lazy—the corrupt tool of corrupt carpetbaggers and totally unfit for self-government. His hunger for land is sneered at with reference to "forty acres and a mule," his serious attempts to exercise his newly achieved rights as a citizen are overlooked or misrepresented; and his efforts to provide a free public school system for poor Southerners, both black and white, are completely ignored. The Klan which wiped out all of these democratic aspirations in a reign of terror and bloodshed appears in these textbooks as a mischievous aggregation of gay young men intent upon Good Government, who frightened the Negro out of politics by the harmless practice of waving ghostly bedsheets before windows at midnight.

An Historical Lie

This is the historical picture of the Negro that lies behind the average white person's attitude: a picture that persists in spite of the mass of contrary evidence presented in the scholarly research of DuBois, Allen, Aptheker, and a host of others.

It is a picture that persists because forces in our economic life would like to keep the Negro in a position akin to slavery.

What the textbooks indicate, the radio and movies embellish, with their tremendous influence on mass attitudes. There are few exceptions to the usual stereotype of the happy-go-lucky, ignorant, superstitious, docile, shuffling Negro, the Stepin Fetchits and the Rochesters; and the great artists like Rex Ingram and Paul Robeson are almost entirely excluded from roles of dignity and importance that would help to correct the distorted picture. Such films as *The Birth of a Nation, So Red the Rose* and *Gone With The Wind,* with their audience adding up to millions, do incalculable harm by perpetuating the stereotype.

The effect upon the average white child is to destroy the respect he would normally have for the personality of the Negro. When he grows up he is prepared for complacent acceptance of race discrimination, the poll tax, lynchings, or any other device whereby the Negro is kept in his present inferior position as a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for others. The effect upon the Negro child of this type of education is of course even more harmful. Early in life he is given a sense of inferiority buttressed by "historical" evidence. He is robbed of his racial heritage and of the feeling of security that comes from knowing that he is part of a group of people who have made great contributions to American culture and should have a common share in the benefits of liberty.

Here is a challenge to the forces of democracy in education of which we have heard so much in the past few years. If we are to build in white children that attitude of respect for personality which transcends all lines of color relationship; if we are to give Negro children a clear insight into their position in American life and a pride in the achievement of their people, then we must be ready to make changes in the present philosophy and procedures of education. Many teachers, parents, and administrators are becoming aware of the problem and are moving toward some solution. Here and there schools and school systems are beginning to face the facts.

The Little Red School House of New York believes that democracy is best taught through daily habits of getting along with other people. The classroom therefore becomes a democratic community where children of different races and religions work and live together. Through the give and take of group life they come to have a respect for other people which is the basis of equalitarian outlook.

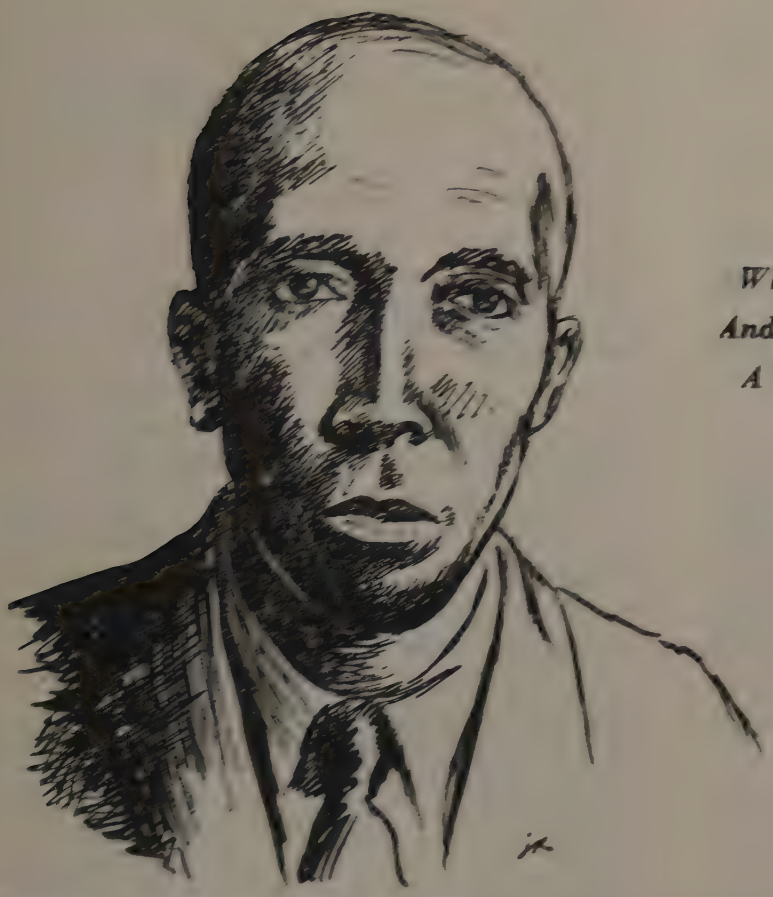
But you cannot limit the teaching of democracy to group relations in a classroom, basic and important as that is. For several months during the eighth grade the children study the Civil War period in American history and a closely linked subject called The Negro in Our Community.

Here the emphasis is on living situations rather than textbook abstractions. The children step out of their classroom community and get the feel of life in the larger world. By automobile they travel to central New Jersey, where they see migratory workers, the Joads of the Atlantic coastal plain, who begin in midwinter picking beans in the Everglades and move northward with the season. The children learn something of the life of the Negroes who are among the lowest paid American workers. They begin their study with a realization of the economic basis of the race problem in our civilization.

From this actual contact with modern working conditions of the Negro people they travel backward in time to slavery days. They are given source material as much as possible: reports of travels through the slave states, diaries, autobiographies. Every aspect and every point of view is presented, without attempt to force upon them a particular interpretation. In the process of research they have another contact with Negro people at the Harlem public library where they do some of their research. Through actual contact with people they are breaking down the stereotypes which they may have been forming.

Out of this research, out of the many contacts with living Negro people, emerges a picture quite unlike the usual stereotype. The Negro people emerge as a people differing in no wise from the whites in native capacity and achievement under difficult circumstances; a people with their heroes and leaders of high caliber, with their bold and heroic Douglass and Sojourner Truth as well as their Uncle Tom type: a people with capacity for tragic expression as well as humor. There emerges

(*Continued on page* 21)



OWEN WHITFIELD

Who Declares: "Hunger Knows No Color!"
And Organizes Both Black and White
A Sketch of the Sharecroppers' Leader

by LILLIAN BARNARD GILKES

Thirty-five years a sharecropper, father of eleven children, holder of numerous offices including that of vice-president in the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America, CIO, and recently elected Vice-President of the National Negro Congress, Reverend Whitfield's leadership of the outcast and oppressed has not been confined to his own race. "Hunger knows no color!" he says. "When you draw a color line around an organization supposed to be helping the people, you turn it into something that works out against the people." Six years ago when Whitfield was a sharecropper on relief, preaching to his people on Sundays of a Promised Land beyond this earth where there would be no more hunger and no more mourning, he got a demonstration of that fact in unforgettable circumstances.

In 1934, despite the fact that protection against eviction was written into the cotton contracts under the Agricultural Adjustment Administration reduction program, sharecroppers and tenant farmers were being thrown off the land in great numbers, and through the county agents' control over local relief, were being forced to work fourteen hours a day at an average wage of forty cents. If they wrote to Washington complaining about not receiving the benefit checks the landlords were supposed to divide with them, they were blacklisted. Relief—which came from federal surplus commodities—was withheld. This practice was general in every state having cotton tenants and sharecroppers.

Incident in Missouri

Into the relief office of a little southeastern Missouri town, one morning, came four women—two white and two Negro. They had not started out together; the Negroes by chance had overtaken the white women on the road. But they kept on together, since all were bound for the same destination. They had come thirteen miles, starting at daybreak. On their feet in place of shoes, were pieces of old rubber-tire casing tied on with rags.

The welfare agent looked up inquisitively:

"You'll have to wait till Thursday." Regulations. No relief except on the regular day. The

regular day was Thursday. It was only Tuesday.

The four women looked frightened. One spoke for the others—black and white. They hadn't had anything to eat for two days. At night their children cried for food. No money in the house.

Nevertheless the law said Thursday.

In a corner of the relief office sat Rev. Whitfield. He arose, walked up to the agent at the desk.

"You mean to say that *that's* the law of this country? Folks starving and can't get nuthin' till Thursday rolls around?"

The agent became angry. The four women said they wouldn't leave until they got some food for their children. The agent picked up the telephone.

Rev. Whitfield never forgot what happened.

"Deputies. . ... Guns hangin' all over them. They kicked those women out. Beat them. Threw them into the roadway."

He made up his mind then. He was going to Washington.

"I saw a picture on a postcard. A big building and a whole lot of steps. The Capitol. I was going to stand there, jump up and down on those steps, and holler and scream till the cops got there and I could tell my story to somebody. That was what I was going to do."

Whitfield met a Congressman. He was given money for a meal in a cafeteria, was turned over to somebody who took him to see Harry Hopkins. When Whitfield swore he was going to sit down right there until something was done, Mr. Hopkins promised to help. He did. He told Whitfield what to say, what to ask for.

Whitfield went back home. Back in Missouri the simple Negro went to the welfare agent, who was also a planter. "This water," he said, "this water runnin' out over the floor from all them grapefruit and vegetables. They're spoilt. An' it's got to stop!" He told the agent what he had told the men in Washington. "I'm not talkin' for the Negroes. Or white folks, either one. I'm talkin' for the *people!* Color don't count!"

The agent was somewhat belligerent. "What if I don't do it?"

The Negro didn't argue. He told the agent that he trusted in his honesty. And a day later two hundred helpers were giving out food supplies.

In 1937 Reverend Whitfield persuaded the Farm Security Administration to settle five hundred cotton tenant families on a rehabilitation project at La Forge, Missouri. One of the newly built homes was allotted to him, and for two years he had a taste of what it meant "to have enough to eat—and some left over for the next day. To lie down at night and listen to the mosquitoes singin' on the *outside!*"

In 1939 he lost his home—the only home he had ever had.

In January of that year 1,700 people from local plantations were evicted without notice. They appealed to Whitfield to help them.

The Negro preacher decided once again to appeal to the conscience of the people who governed. He led his poverty-stricken followers in a roadside demonstration that focussed the attention of the entire nation on Missouri.

"Yes, you've got somewhere to go," he told his homeless people. "There's one place. Get out on the highway! All the room in the world there, and it's yours, the one thing you own! That Highway 66 goes everywhere, clear on across the country. It's in every state—Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma—all the way out in California I saw it. It's wide, and can't nobody put you off because it's yours. And the people are goin' to *see!*"

Nine hundred families are still camped at Polar Bluff on Highway 66. Largely on Whitfield's prompting, and backed by the union, Governor Lloyd Stark last year set up a special committee which has worked out a plan in cooperation with the Farm Security Administration to construct houses and settle these people on another rehabilitation project similar to the one at La Forge. Several hundred additional families which were slated for eviction last January are being retained on the land until the project can get under way. The FSA has announced that a tract of 2,644 acres has already been acquired in New Madrid County, another of 1,500 in Scott County. Whitfield's own five-point program, which provides for subsistence farming, seed and stock loans and supplementary employment on WPA, has been adopted. Of course, there's chiseling—as Whitfield points out. The ten-acre units originally contemplated have been cut to three acres.

The Negro leader has an organization of

(*Continued on page* 20)

EDITORIALS

APM and EQUALITY

AN old popular tale describes how a hero fought an evil spirit who tried in vain to evade his powerful antagonist by rapid changes from one form to another. This, too, is the story of our fight with fascism. For the trend to Hitlerism has taken on a new guise in the ominous tendency towards our involvement in war. And the preparations for war are made the occasion for alien-baiting, for curtailment of civil liberties, while anti-Semitism grows apace. Genuine defense is urgently needed by democracy. But the presumed measures "in defense of democracy" are rapidly turning into an offensive against it. Against this present guise of the fascist threat the people are adopting the strategy embodied in the American Peace Mobilization. Mr. Field's article in this issue succinctly tells the story. The slogan of APM speaks volumes: "Peace Through Democracy, Democracy Through Peace!"

Who are the friends of democracy? Senator Burke, co-author of the Conscription Bill, who was a member of the Khaki Shirts, and who expressed warm admiration for Hitler and Nazi rule on his return from Germany in 1938? Or the press of the nation, which either ignored or grossly mis-reported the Chicago meeting of EPM, at which 15,000,000 Americans were represented? Or those responsible for the brutal attack on a prayer meeting against conscription on the Capitol steps on September 5th, at which a minister and a rabbi were arrested and many praying men and women were beaten? Or those in high political office who arouse hysterical fear for reasons concealed from the people?

The truth is that APM *is* the people: it speaks for that vast majority of Americans who oppose the baiting of Jews, Negroes and other minorities, who oppose our entry into the war, whose vital concern is the healthy growth of democracy. The preservation of democracy and its extension *within* the country has been conveniently forgotten by the pro-war advocates.

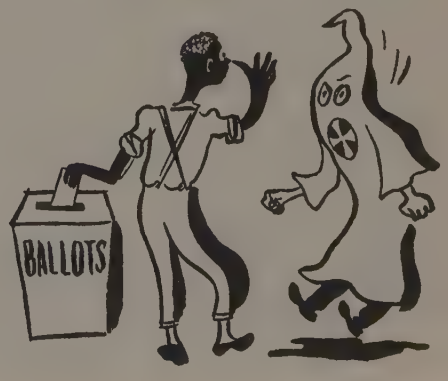
The fate of the Jews and of all minorities stands or falls with a sturdy defense of democracy. This is the lesson which the march of fascism in the past decade has taught us. Because APM shows that it has learned this lesson, because APM is at present the strongest influence towards this end, *Equality* lends it full support.

No Poll Tax!

IN these dangerous times, when every American should have the life-or-death right to pass judgment on what his government is doing, ten million citizens of the United States do not possess the most fundamental democratic privilege—the right to vote. Academically, they do possess the right; in reality, they are too poor to pay for it. For it is against the poor of eight Southern states that the tax is aimed—against those who have the greatest stake in the voting power. We are on the brink of war and economic ruin. Ten million American adults, representing with their families approximately twenty million people, have no legal means of influencing those upon whom the power to plunge us into war rests.

Many months ago a bill to abolish the poll-tax system was introduced into Congress. The bill was prepared by the Southern Conference for Human Welfare—whose chairman, Reverend John B. Thompson, is the leader of the American Peace Mobilization. The bill was introduced into Congress by Rep. Lee E. Geyer of California.

The bill has not even been allowed to come to a vote. In a letter to *Equality*, Representative Geyer reveals the startling fact that Rep. Walter of Pennsylvania, Chairman of the Committee that is "considering" the bill, "absolutely refuses to have the hearings printed in order that they may be distributed to the membership of the



House and throughout the nation. This action . . . is entirely unprecedented."

Responsibility for this ugly fact rests surely upon both the Administration and the Republican Party which seeks to replace it, for the record reveals that both Democrats and Republicans have combined to sabotage and bury the Geyer Bill. And both party platforms, while they speak in vague and pious generalities of "human welfare," scrupulously avoid saying that the poll-tax will be abolished, or even fought against. It would seem that Democrats and Republicans are united in every effort to crush the demands of those who cry for democracy in the South. This is quite clearly evident when one observes the record of both parties on another democratic legislative proposal—the Anti-Lynching Bill. Here too there has been united opposition.

To the Negro who lives under the shadow of the lynch-rope and to the Southerner who is denied the right to vote, democracy is something to be fought for. That fight is now going on—on American soil. The struggle is going forward in sharecroppers' huts , in spindly Georgia churches, on street corners, in stuffy meeting halls, in trade union offices. The majority of Southern citizens, black and white, must be given the right to vote!

Conscription Repeal

CONGRESSMAN Vito Marcantonio has introduced a resolution into the House of Representatives to repeal the Burke-Wadsworth Conscription Bill. Declaring that the bill "places in immediate and serious jeopardy the civil liberties and rights of the people," the resolution points out further that "compulsory military service and training is a menace to the peace of the United States and will inevitably lead to war." Events which preceded the signing of the bill by President Roosevelt indicated just such a conclusion; events which have since transpired strengthen it. Aside from the bill itself, there seems to be a very significant fact that ought to be brought out. Vito Marcantonio, who demands the repeal of conscription, who fought against the numerous moves which are pushing us to the brink of war, came within an ace of winning the primary nominations of all three parties on the ballot a few weeks ago. He is now the Republican nominee, the American Labor Party nominee, and came only a few hundred votes short of being the Democratic nominee. Somewhere here can be found a moral about the direction of the people's will.

Alien Baiting

THERE is irony in the fact that we celebrate two important anniversaries this month—the discovery of America by an Italian, and the dedication of the Statue of Liberty, built by a Frenchman. It is ironical because the anniversaries occur at a time when discrimination against Americans of foreign birth is widespread. Non-citizens are being fired from their jobs. They are being made to submit to the discriminatory and undemocratic procedures of fingerprinting and registration. From the halls of Congress come threats of deportation, concentration camps.

It is ironical, too, that thousands of Jews who fled from the horrible persecutions of Nazi Germany—persecutions of which fingerprinting and concentration camps were basic characteristics—must now, in democratic America, be faced with the same institutions from which they fled.

The American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born has undertaken the responsibility of centralizing through its offices information on discrimination against Americans of foreign birth. Carey McWilliams, Chairman of the Committee, has requested that every instance of discrimination against Americans because of their foreign birth be reported immediately to him at the Committee's offices, 79 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Readers of *Equality* should be interested in cooperating with the Committee in its efforts to halt persecution of aliens and foreign born.

"Friday" and the Press

THE September 27th issue of the magazine *Friday* published a startling exposure of anti-Semitism in America and its connections with the international Nazi center at Erfurt, Germany. A photostated letter addressed to "Dear Fritz" [Kuhn] and signed by W. J. Cameron was reproduced. In this letter the Bundsman was reassured that the Ford Motor Company would evade specific inquiries about Kuhn's connections there, and concludes that Cameron will meet Kuhn to "outline our next

move." W. J. Cameron, who is the radio voice of Henry Ford, in a statement solicited by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, denies the letter. Strangely enough, however, there has been no intimation that he will bring legal action against Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, the authors of this exposure.

One would expect from the ferocious propaganda for war against Germany carried by the American press that they would be delighted to publicize such an exposure through paid advertisements. The case is quite otherwise. Advertisements of this story were refused by the *New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Mirror*, *New York Herald-Tribune* and the *New York Post*. In Chicago the *Times* published the advertisement in its first edition only. The *Chicago Tribune* refused it. Can it be a coincidence that a full page advertisement of the Ford Motor Company appeared in the *New York Times* of September 27th?

What can one say of the *Jewish Morning Journal*, the *Jewish Day* and the *Jewish Daily Forward*, all of which refused to advertise one of the most sensational exposures of powerful anti-Semitic forces in America?

The anti-Nazi professions of the American press hardly seem consistent with the refusal to accept this advertising. The story behind this incident would make absorbing reading. However, it would seem incumbent upon the Department of Justice, if they are really interested in fifth column activities, thoroughly to investigate the anti-Semitic cesspool revealed by this and the ensuing articles of the series to be published by *Friday*.

The Negro Playwrights Company

AN event of cultural significance for the Negro people, and all America as well, is the formation of the Negro Playwrights Company. Previous efforts to establish a Negro theatre have usually failed largely because Negro dramatists, under the influence of prevailing white psychology, themselves were deficient in their portrayal of Negro life.

This has at last been overcome. The instantaneous rise of Richard Wright to the front rank of American novelists with his relentlessly honest book, *Native Son*, is one sign that Negro writers are breaking the bonds of restricted cultural opportunity. Theodore Ward, General Manager of the Negro Playwrights Company, is another writer who combines skill in the dramatic craft with a forthright and sincere outlook on the Negro people. It was the Federal Theatre which gave Mr. Ward and other Negroes the opportunity to practice their profession and to grow in it. Though the Federal Theatre has gone down, its fruits are found in this newly organized theatre.

As their prospectus states, the company's purpose is to "foster the spirit of unity between the races, provide an outlet for the creative talents of Negro artists . . . and supply the community with an honest . . . theatre, reflecting the historic reality of the life of the Negro people."

The first production of the season, opening on October 22, will be Theodore Ward's *Big White Fog*. The address of the company is the Liberty Theatre, West 135th Street and Lenox Avenue, New York City.

WAR AND ANTI-SEMITISM

(*Continued from page 6*)

no one believe that one minority group can be persecuted without affecting every other group. Fascism has taught us only too well that the persecution of one group was always merely the stepping stone towards the persecution of the people as a whole.

There are those who raise the hue and cry that Jews are war-mongers, that they are attempting to drag America into the war for their own purposes and for their own social ends. This is an out and out lie and is merely another attempt to spread anti-Semitism amongst the American people. The Jewish people have never gained anything but misery and hardships and pogroms from war, and have nothing to gain in this instance but more of such suffering and persecution. The greatest majority of the Jewish people, like all other people, desire peace and democracy. To accuse them of such motives is to slander a people who, from the very first day of their existence, preached the message of peace to the world.

The fate of democracy and the American way of life demands that hatred against the Jew, against the alien and against all minorities be eradicated.

"ON STRIVERS ROW"

by POLK LEWIS

WITH its presentation of Abram Hill's comedy *On Strivers Row* the American Negro Theater opened its season at the 135th Street Library Theater. This group is not to be confused with the Negro Playwrights Company, whose season has not yet begun [See editorial—Ed.]. *On Strivers Row* attempts to satirize the artificial standards of middle class Negroes who seek to maintain a way of life alien to their traditions and beyond their economic means. The piece takes its title from the one-time exclusive middle class section of Harlem.

However, owing to unclarities on the part of the playwright, the play lacks unity. Mr. Hill is unable to decide just what part of Negro life constitutes the stuff of comedy. He is led at times to ridicule what is already ridiculous, as when he gives to stuffed-shirt characters names like *Tillie Petunia*, or has them speak in exaggerated English accents.

More seriously, while trying to probe the foibles of the Strivers Row crowd, Mr. Hill loses his perspective and pokes fun at that section of the Negro group which must be taken seriously: the domestics, whose simple dignity and sincere struggling form a somber contrast to the middle class. Thus, while bent upon criticizing a group which sorely needs it, Mr. Hill ends up on the same limb with Octavius Roy Cohen, to whom all Negroes are a joke. Thus the play bogs down in its development and must be kept afloat with punch lines of a kind which violate the level of the piece. Because of this confusion *On Strivers Row* causes the audience to falter between the poles of genuine amusement and embarrassment; bursts of sincere laughter are punctuated by periods of blank silence.

Commendable was the work of several of the actors, who do a good job despite poor directing. Their good work is an indication of the amount of real talent lost to the American stage through Jim-Crow. The American Negro Theater has set out to provide an outlet for this talent. It should, however, give more careful consideration to its intentions. It must have a clear-cut point of view, which must emerge from a careful analysis of Negro life and its connections with America as a whole.

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OWEN WHITFIELD

(*Continued from page* 16)

16,000 people in the Missouri Agricultural Council, affiliated with the UCAPAWA. Some time ago he was summoned to a conference of state political leaders, at which it was suggested that the votes of his 16,000 followers might be worth a considerable sum of money to him personally—if he would support the "right" candidates. "How much?" he wanted to know. The Democrats offered him $5,000. The Republicans wouldn't go above $2,500. Neither bid won.

Asked about the political leanings of the group he represented, he looked the state machine-men in the eye:

"We used to be Republicans. Then we were Democrats awhile. Now we ain't anything but the people, and we're goin' to stay that way. We'll be for the man who helps the people."

(*Continued from page* 14)

the picture of a people that in spite of oppression has made great contributions to American culture, has produced scientists like Carver, singers like Marian Anderson, and poets like Langston Hughes.

A habit of critical thinking also emerges from this study. Children read Congressional reports about the bloody terrorism in which the Klan was born and compare these documents with the textbook *apologias,* thus developing a method of historical propaganda analysis which will be of great value to them.

The insight these children are gaining does not remain static. The school begins to put this critical intelligence to work in these children's own situations. They scrutinize the fiction they have read, from *Little Black Sambo* to *Gone With the Wind.* In books they encounter few attractive portrayals of Negroes such as they have met in real life or such as emerge from an unbiased study of American history. Children's fiction abounds with Negro stereotypes, with genial mammies, docile servants, and the like.

Attitudes expressed over the radio, in films and in the children's own community, come in for analysis too. Here is an example:

The Negro—"nigger" or "boogy", as he is called by the child of 103rd Street—is considered lower than the alley cat.

The policeman favors the white child.

The teacher favors the white child.

The pedestrian favors the white child.

But, all in all, the children have respect for Negro strength. Although the Negro gets the worst of it he will give as well as take.

I think we could stand a few hot abolitionists.

I think it is a crime that people, white and black, cannot get along together.

Unity Through Art

Through artistic expression comes the final contribution to racial understanding. Art performs its most important function here when it serves to give meaning and significance to the experiences which these children, black and white, have had together. The children as a group are forced to clarify and crystallize their new insights and attitudes. In their plays about the old South they consciously try to portray every type of person, white and Negro, rather than give stereotypes and revert to romanticism. Through the medium of modern dance they express the problems of the Negro, past and present, from African origins to inequalities of present-day life and the struggle of the Negro to achieve economic democracy. Art expression takes many forms; a ballad about Frederick Douglass, a poem about Nat Turner, clay modeling, drawing, etc.

The effect on the Negro boy and girl is just as important as that upon the white. Negro children have in general but the vaguest conception of their racial culture. Their study of this often works changes in personality development. The sermon which follows this paragraph was written as part of a dance by a shy, diffident Negro girl who gained dignity and self-confidence through a study of her racial heritage. From Vachel Lindsay and James Welldon Johnson she had learned that the sermon form can be utilized for poetic expression, and she modeled hers after a baptism service she had witnessed on a visit South. Like the slaves of old she utilized religious terminology and figures to express earthly aspirations for freedom, a freedom both personal and for her group. In the sermon she created and played the role of Harriet Tubman, Moses of her people, who led many slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad.

HARRIET TUBMAN:

Shout, oh children, shout.
We're gwine to be free,
For God will bring us liberty.
There'll be no sorrow in our hearts,
No bloodshed or farewell cry of motherless children.
There'll be no sun to burn our backs,
No rain to wet our faces,
No master to beat us to death.

CRIES OF SLAVES:

Halleluia, Lord. Cause the Lord gwine to set us free.
Take me home, Lord. I'm not gwine to be no slave no more.

HARRIET TUBMAN:

De Lord calls us by lightning
And he calls us by the thunder,
And he calls us by every living thing;
For he meant us to be free,
And we're gwine to be free, every one of us,
Yes, free at last.

If the children begin to cope with the Negro problem in our schools, then they will be more ready to cope with it later on as citizens in a democracy. That, we believe, is the American Way in education.

FASCIST FEVER CHART

(¶) Roberto Farinacci, former Secretary of Italy's Fascist Party, has patted Father Coughlin on the back for "his understanding of Fascist principles." Writing in his newspaper on September 11, Farinacci declared: "Fathe Coughlin takes a firm stand against Jewish democratic propaganda in the United States . . . Coughlin wrote in his magazine *Social Justice* that 'Mussolini is the world's best statesman. He made peace with the Pope, saved European civilization in Spain, and it must be concluded that Italy is the hope of Christian civilized Europe.' Never before has Coughlin taken such a strong stand . . . Coughlin will be compensated . . . by the triumph tomorrow." . . . So that now the "Mad Monk of Michigan," as Michael Quill, Irish-Catholic union leader, has named him, is quite O.K. with both sides of the Rome-Berlin Axis.

(¶) Henry Ford again: The latest issues of the New York Spanish-language newspaper *La Prensa* advertises among those books for sale in its bookstore a Spanish translation of Henry Ford's *International Jew.*

(¶) An alarming symptom of the times, brought on by war hysteria, is the disfranchisement of minority parties occurring throughout the country. In many states Socialist, Communist and Labor parties have been deliberately kept from the ballot. Violence, vigilantism and threats of lynching are going unpunished . . . all of which sounds somewhat sour when President Roosevelt's promises of "free elections" are recalled.. . . In nineteen states, by means of laws deliberately promulgated for the purpose, minority parties find it virtually impossible to get on the ballot. . . . Added to the fact that eight states require payment of poll-tax to vote, it looks as though a good number of American citizens are being deprived of their voting rights. . . .

(¶) The "brutal, vicious, conscienceless thugs" (La Follette Report) that employers like Henry Ford have maintained to fight off union attempts to raise wages and improve working conditions, may be elevated to new honor and authority with full rights to shoot and beat up unionists as a part of a "National Industrial Defense Corps," under the terms of a bill that has been introduced in Congress by Senator Sheppard of Texas. . . . The bill would permit employers to recruit and maintain their own private armies, responsible to no one but the employer. Alleged function of the thug squads would be to guard against "subversive" activities. . . . The meaning of that is clear to every union member who has had his head cracked by employers' guards during a strike. . . . The bill makes this suspicion valid, for it provides that the "Defense Corps" are to be used during strikes. . . . This bill must be defeated; and as usual, it's up to the "little" people, with their letters and penny post-cards, to do the job. Write now. . . .

(¶) What "defense" means. . . . For the fourth time in four months, Senate Majority Leader Alben Barkley told the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People that he does not intend to do anything to bring up the federal anti-lynching bill for a vote on the floor of the Senate. . . . The excuse this time is "national defense." The bill, however, has been in the Senate for years. . . . Meanwhile, the Klan grows more arrogant, and the Negroes of the South are beginning to chafe under the empty promises of the major political parties. . . .

(¶) Speaking of the press, the

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N. Y. Daily News, yellowest of the yellow press, revealed a lot in its issue of September 24. The *News* said quite frankly that we are on the verge of entering the war. "All this is being done, we are persuaded, with the approval of the majority of Americans," says the *News* editorial. "Or if it isn't, the majority have no chance to register disapproval. Both Presidential candidates are interventionists. . . . We think we are going into this war for the same deep, underlying cause that took us in last time. . . . As long as Britain and the United States together have the world's biggest combined naval power, these two nations can run the world. . . ." Well . . . that's quite frank. But it has nothing to do with the defense of democracy.

(¶) Bad news: The American Civil Liberties Union reports that repressions against working men and women and against political minorities are the worst it has experienced in twenty years. Most of these, says the report, come from Congress, and are apparently sponsored by the Administration. . . . In addition, the report notes with alarm that there "are local enactments and orders, mob violence, and hasty formation of citizen's committees dedicated to stamping out 'subversive' influences." Why the repression and the violence? The Civil Liberties Union, which last year supported President Roosevelt, supplies its own answer . . . "it seems certain that the drive for vast national defense with the likelihood of military conscription [The report was issued before conscription became law.—Ed.] will weaken the defenses of democracy and imperil not only the liberties of minorities but of all citizens generally"—all of which, incidentally, *Equality* has been pointing out for many, many months. . . .

(¶) Shades of 1917: Dr. Ralph Cheney, teacher in the Pasadena, Calif., school system, was notified a few weeks ago that he would not be allowed to teach next year. . . . "Since your school work has been excellent," writes his principal, "and your personal association so fine, I regret exceedingly that this change is necessary. . . ." The reason for the refusal to re-appoint Dr. Cheney, is no secret—Dr. Cheney is a leader of the American Peace Crusade, and has been speaking in opposition to the war moves of the Administration. . . . But Dr. Cheney's friends did not take the matter lying down, and a campaign was organized. . . . So great has the opposition become that the members of the Pasadena Board of Education are now tripping over each other in their efforts to blame one another for the refusal to re-appoint. . . . But as yet, Dr. Cheney has not gotten his job back. . . .

(¶) The real sympathies of the Dies Committee are revealed in Senator Patman's letter in the *Congressional Record* of August 22nd. A sub-committee headed by Representative Dempsey (recently defeated in the New Mexico Senatorial primaries) says Patman, went out of its way to white-wash Lieutenant Colonel Byoir, accused by Patman of being a Nazi agent working with the U.S. reserve. Byoir received his apprenticeship in propaganda-making as a member of the Creel Committee during the World War I. The Dies Committee refused to give Senator Pitman an opportunity to testify. He insisted that he could substantiate his charges. . . .

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